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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 10 December 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)
later: Ms. Incera (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Costa Rica)
later: Mr. Chowdhury (Chairman) ..... (Bangladesh)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*) (A/51/950 and Add.1-6; A/52/7/Add.1-2 and 4, A/52/16/Add.1 and A/52/303 and Add.1; A/C.5/52/19, A/C.5/52/20, A/C.5/52/23 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/52/27)

1. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) drew the Committee's attention to a letter from the Legal Counsel regarding the legality of the applicability of net budgeting to the Joint Inspection Unit, the International Civil Service Commission and jointly financed services in Vienna as proposed by the Secretary-General in the programme budget. It was the view of the Legal Counsel that net budgeting was applicable, and that there was no legal impediment.

2. **Mr. Stein** (Germany) said that he trusted that it would be possible to discuss that issue further in informal consultations.

3. **Mr. Yussuf** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the reform process could not be accomplished without the political and financial support of Member States. He regretted that some Member States, having the capacity to pay, especially the major contributor, had not fulfilled their obligations under the Charter. He urged all Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions in order to provide the necessary resources for the implementation of all mandated programmes and activities, including those approved in the context of the reform.

4. The sections in document A/52/303 which were affected by the reform proposals must be considered in conjunction with the relevant main sections of the proposed programme budget. The Group of 77 and China regretted that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had been unable to reach agreement on the conclusions and recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly on the sections contained in document A/52/303, although he recognized the difficulty of the task which CPC had faced because of the timing of its consideration of the report and the unfortunate position adopted by some of its members. In that regard he reiterated the full support of the Group of 77 and China for the role and mandate of CPC, and endorsed its recommendation that the medium-term plan, the principal policy directive, should be taken into account during the consideration of the Secretary-General's reform proposals.

5. The Group of 77 and China underscored the need to look closely at proposed reductions in staff, especially at the lower level, in order to avoid any further negative impact on the implementation of mandated programmes and activities, and had noted with concern the Advisory Committee's comments on the apparent increase in high-level posts and reductions at lower levels. He agreed with ACABQ that the trend was affecting the grade pyramid, and endorsed the request for a report on the grading structure.

6. The Group of 77 and China regretted the failure to submit reports on the expeditious phasing-out of gratis personnel, an issue which must be considered in conjunction with the proposed reduction in staff. The reports should be submitted without further delay. Given that the number of vacant posts was expected to continue to exceed the requirement to abolish posts, the Group agreed with ACABQ that every measure should be taken to avoid involuntary separation and that no involuntary separation should occur solely as a result of savings measures.

7. He shared the concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee regarding the Secretary-General's proposal for net budgeting. In the absence of clear responses to those concerns, the Group of 77 and China concurred in the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the amounts "netted out" should be restored.

8. He noted that some of the estimates contained in document A/52/303 related to decisions to be taken by the General Assembly. With regard to the development account, he concurred in the Advisory Committee's recommendation to appropriate $12.7 million under a new section 34, and looked forward to General Assembly action on that matter. He urged the submission of a detailed report on the development account in early 1998.

9. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding the increase in the level of appropriations over the estimate proposed by the Secretary-General; the delegations concerned would be submitting proposals which might lead to an increase in the overall level of appropriations, so as to ensure the full implementation of all mandated programmes and activities.

10. With reference to the budget sections as presented in document A/52/303, under section 1B (General Assembly Affairs and conference services) he noted that the substantive servicing of the Fifth and Sixth Committees, and of the Security Council, would not be undertaken by the new Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. He requested further information. The Group of 77 and China agreed that, starting with the coming biennium, resources for the Office of the President of the General Assembly should be approved on an object-of-expenditure basis.

11. With regard to section 2A (Political affairs), since the substantive activities of subprogramme 6 (Decolonization) would be maintained in the Department of Political Affairs the resources allocated to that subprogramme should be reviewed. The programme narrative of section 2B (Disarmament) would have to be revised to accord with the medium-term plan. The Group of 77 and China had serious concerns about the proposal to close the three regional centres for peace and disarmament at Kathmandu, Lima and Lomé.

12. Regarding section 7A (Economic and social affairs), a revision of the narratives of the eight merged subprogrammes would be necessary to ensure conformity with the medium-term plan. He noted with concern the further proposed reduction in posts in the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and requested information on that proposal with regard to the implementation of the programme of work of the three previous departments. He also wished to know what the resource requirements would be under each of the new Department's subprogrammes. The overall decrease in resources under section 7A gave cause for deep concern, and he stressed the need to maintain the Organization's capacity to implement technical cooperation programmes. He also wished to have information on the status of the extrabudgetary posts assigned to the former three departments.

13. Under section 14 (Crime control), the Group of 77 and China were awaiting the organizational chart of the new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. The programme of that section required revision to align it with the medium-term plan, and more information was required on the implementation of drug control and crime prevention programmes. He supported the proposal to strengthen the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

14. Regarding section 22 (Human rights), the Group of 77 and China did not agree that human rights cut across other substantive fields of the Secretariat's work programmes. If any activity did so, it was the right to development. The programme narrative under that section required revision.

15. The Group of 77 and China supported the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on section 25 (Humanitarian assistance). The narrative of that section also required revision.

16. The Group of 77 and China shared the concern about the appropriateness of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations dealing with the humanitarian aspects of demining, since that would add new responsibilities to a Department which already suffered from a lack of resources. Further information was required. He noted with concern the proposed transfer of $2.3 million from the regular budget to UNDP as a one-time grant related to the proposed transfer of responsibilities for the coordination of natural disaster mitigation activities. The proposal needed further clarification.

17. Regarding section 26 (Communications and public information), the Secretary-General should have provided a more complete description of those recommendations of the Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities which were to be implemented. The programme narrative of that section also needed revision. As for the proposal for post abolition, more information was still needed.

18. He trusted that the information requested by the Group of 77 and China would be made available in the next few days.

19. **Mr. Baquero** (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the Movement associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

20. The adoption of the budget must take into account the role of the medium-term plan as the principal policy directive, and existing financial rules and regulations and budgetary procedures should be followed until Member States agreed otherwise.

21. The Secretary-General should submit budget proposals on a full-cost basis, with total requirements from all sources of funding. Member States were obliged to provide the necessary resources for the full implementation of approved mandates, in accordance with their assessed contribution as determined by the General Assembly. There must be congruity between mandates and resources. Like the creation of posts, any reduction in staff should be fully justified. Moreover, staff reductions should not be aimed solely at achieving savings, and must be considered in conjunction with the issue of gratis personnel. The presence of over 340 gratis personnel in the Organization, including 134 in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, was a matter of concern. Functions in that Department should be performed by United Nations staff.

22. Regarding section 2A (Political affairs), the Non-Aligned Movement reiterated its support for subprogramme 1.6 (Decolonization) of the medium-term plan. He noted the Secretary-General's decision to maintain the decolonization programme in the Department of Political Affairs.

23. He reiterated his support for subprogramme 1.7 (Question of Palestine) of the medium-term plan, and

reaffirmed the need to maintain the post of the Chief of the UNCTAD Special Economic Unit for assistance to the Palestinian people.

24. The Non-Aligned Movement also reiterated its support for programme 26 (Disarmament) of the medium-term plan; the proposal to restructure Secretariat functions in that area should be guided by the priorities established by the General Assembly. The elimination of nuclear weapons continued to be a matter of the highest priority, in which connection the Movement upheld the importance of the principles and priorities established in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in accordance with which the United Nations had primary responsibility for promoting nuclear disarmament. The elimination and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction were best addressed through multilateral, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. On conventional weapons, steps must also be taken to deal effectively with the increasing problem of illicit transfers of weapons, particularly small arms.

25. He emphasized the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole negotiating body in that domain. Adequate disarmament staff should be provided in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed the importance of the fourth special session on disarmament in determining future action on disarmament issues. It was evident that unilateral policies and partial measures were inadequate, and that a collective approach was required.

26. The treatment given in the proposed programme budget to the regional centres for peace and disarmament, and the fellowship programme, was not coherent with the medium-term plan, and the programme narrative of document A/52/303 on disarmament should be revised.

27. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterated its support for programme 19 (Human rights) of the medium-term plan, and supported the promotion of human rights under section 22 of the proposed programme budget. All human rights were universal, indivisible and interdependent. While national and regional differences must be borne in mind, it was the duty of States, regardless of political, economic and cultural system, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The right to development had been recognized as an indivisible and integral part of human rights and should be fully implemented.

28. The countries of the Non-Aligned Movement were of the view that human rights had been overemphasized in the Secretary-General's proposals at the expense of development, and that the proposals failed to take into account the mutually reinforcing relationship between development and human rights within a framework of democracy and international cooperation. The proposal to integrate the human rights programme into a broad range of the Organization's activities required careful consideration, and he sought clarification regarding the involvement of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the activities of the Executive Committees on Peace and Security, Economic and Social Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, and of the United Nations Development Group.

29. There must be greater transparency in human rights machinery, and the appointment of staff within that machinery must reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation and gender balance. The proposed strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York, and its involvement in all the Organization's activities, would entail additional financial resources, in which regard he requested clarification.

30. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterated its support for subprogramme 19.1 (Right to development, research and analysis) of the medium-term plan. The High Commissioner for Human Rights should propose specific programmes to promote the implementation of the right to development, and the budget should be presented in a format that clearly indicated which programmes and activities promoted that right and the resources allocated to such programmes. The Non-Aligned Movement wished to know what legislative basis there was for the creation of data banks on human rights, how they would be maintained, what their sources of information would be, how their transparency and impartiality would be ensured, and what the financial implications were, since there was the potential for arbitrariness, politicization and misuse. Any data banks must contain information on both developed and developing countries, and Member States must have access. Impartiality must be ensured. The programme narrative of document A/52/303 on human rights should be revised in accordance with the medium-term plan.

31. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterated its support for programme 20 (Humanitarian assistance) of the medium-term plan. He expressed concern over the transfer of demining functions from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The mine clearance policies established by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must remain unchanged.

32. Further clarification was needed of how the functions of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would be

distributed within the United Nations system to ensure delivery of humanitarian assistance to developing countries. The distribution of functions should not lead to any diversion of resources earmarked for mandated activities, it being understood that resources for emergency relief were mobilized separately through appeals.

33. Lastly, he stressed that humanitarian assistance should continue to be governed by the principles of neutrality and impartiality, full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States and the importance of the consent of the State to the provision of humanitarian assistance within its territory. The programme narrative of document A/52/303 on humanitarian assistance should be revised in accordance with the medium-term plan.

34. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that his delegation endorsed the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement.

35. His delegation fully supported the reform initiatives, which were necessary to allow the Organization to meet the aspirations of the world's peoples. Reform should be aimed at bolstering the United Nations financially and politically so that it could enter the next millennium with new vigour and vitality. It should not mean cost-cutting, downsizing and divesting the Organization of its roles reflecting the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Reform initiatives must respect the Organization's rules and regulations and consensus decisions taken by Member States; the medium-term plan, as a principal policy directive, should be the basis for the reform initiatives.

36. The Organization's personnel were a key element in the attainment of its objectives, and high morale was a significant factor in effectiveness and efficiency. The proposal for huge reductions at the junior level and an increase at the top level would adversely affect morale and efficiency, and he fully agreed with the Advisory Committee that any staff reductions should be justified in the same manner as the creation of posts. He noted that the proposed reduction of about 1,000 posts did not meet that criterion, and looked forward to a further, detailed justification to allow the Committee to take a decision. The tendency towards increases at the top level distorted the grade pyramid. The information requested by the Advisory Committee on the number of Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General posts should be provided particularly in view of the proposal to add a new layer at the top.

37. In connection with personnel matters, he noted with regret that the reports on gratis personnel requested in September 1997 had not yet been issued.

38. While his delegation, in the interest of consensus, had agreed with the proposal to create a new Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation, he believed that it would result in a waste of resources, since the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission should be the centres of gravity for disarmament affairs and negotiations. The role of the Secretariat was largely confined to servicing the negotiating bodies, and was being adequately performed by the existing arrangements. His delegation had joined the consensus on the understanding that the mandate of the new Department would be in conformity with the medium-term plan, in view of which the programme narrative in document A/52/303 would have to be rewritten.

39. Since the new Department's role would be confined to the provision of support services, the establishment of an Under-Secretary-General post was unjustified, particularly in view of the existing Under-Secretary-General post for the Conference on Disarmament. He asked the Secretariat to provide, as soon as possible, the information requested by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 25 of its report (A/52/7/Add.1).

40. He was pleased that the decolonization programme, which should be provided with adequate resources, would remain within the Department of Political Affairs. The proposed merger of the three departments responsible for development activities should not adversely affect the Organization's role in that field. He was concerned about the proposed reduction in resources for the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and asked the Secretariat to provide the information requested in paragraphs 31 and 32 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/52/7/Add.1).

41. He agreed with the Advisory Committee that there was no need for an Assistant Secretary-General post in the Office of the Legal Counsel. Care must be taken to ensure that the mandate of the proposed new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention was consistent with the medium-term plan; an organizational chart of that Office should be provided to the Committee.

42. Although Pakistan had demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of human rights, it did not agree that they should be given priority over political, security, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian issues, as implied by paragraph 22.2 of the Secretary-General's report (A/52/303).

43. Some of the proposals under section 25 (Humanitarian assistance) were inconsistent with the Organization's mandate, rules and regulations. He asked how demining activities, which were included under the programme on humanitarian assistance in the medium-term plan, would be

carried out by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The issue of seconded personnel should be subject to General Assembly resolution 51/243 on gratis personnel. With respect to net budgeting, the issue should be deferred for consideration by the Committee; in the meantime, the amounts "netted out" should be restored to the programme budget for 1998-1999. His delegation supported the establishment of a development account, and hoped that the Secretariat would provide the information requested by the Advisory Committee as soon as possible so that the account could become operational.

44. Document A/52/7/Add.1 did not meet the usual high standard of quality of the Advisory Committee's reports; its examination of the issues was somewhat superficial and its recommendations were tentative. If the problem was due to the Secretariat's failure to provide enough information, the Advisory Committee should have sought more time instead of passing the issues on to the Fifth Committee and expecting the latter to assume the functions of an expert body. Lastly, he asked the Secretariat to provide written responses to the questions submitted in writing by his delegation.

45. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that he strongly supported the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. He congratulated the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the high quality of the latter's report. He agreed with the view, expressed in paragraph 21 of the Advisory Committee's first report (A/52/7), that an economy that resulted in an unacceptable inferior product or lower standard of service was a false economy and that the General Assembly must be given the technical data to assure itself that the estimates contained in the proposed programme budget were realistic and reliable. Unfortunately, however, many of the reforms recommended by the Secretary-General had not been backed up by technical data. In addition, the Secretary-General had not provided a detailed report defining administrative expenses and "non-programme" costs, as requested in paragraph 30, subparagraph (c), of the Advisory Committee's first report. That information was essential, *inter alia* for the identification of which "administrative expenses" should be reduced in order to achieve economies for the purpose of financing the new development fund. As for false economies, a good example was the proposed abolition of the three Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, since they would undoubtedly be extremely useful under the new concept of disarmament.

46. With respect to economic and social affairs, he asked where the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries fitted into the organizational structure of the proposed new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, since the organizational chart presented in document A/52/303 did not include that Office, but merely referred to it in a footnote. However, that Office could not be treated lightly, since the General Assembly had decided that Africa should be one of the priorities of the programme budget for 1998-1999 and the Secretary-General had affirmed on many occasions that the reforms should yield the greatest benefits for the African countries. He asked how the Secretary-General intended to strengthen the Office of the Special Coordinator, as requested by the General Assembly.

47. With respect to section 26 on public information, he agreed that information functions must be at the heart of the new framework created by the reforms. He asked which United Nations information centres were to be integrated, and expressed concern about the possibility that some centres, particularly those in Africa, were being given lower priority than others. Some information centres had been established at the express request of legislative bodies, while others covered more than one country and therefore could not be integrated with UNDP offices, as had been proposed. Therefore, the question of integrating centres or reducing their personnel should be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

48. **Mr. Assah** (Togo) said that his delegation fully supported the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

49. His delegation was concerned about the Secretary-General's proposal to abolish the three P-5 posts of the directors of the three Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, since that would entail the closure of the centres themselves, which played a vital role in promoting peace and disarmament. The proposal was particularly surprising in the case of the Regional Centre for Africa, since the Secretary-General himself had sent two consultants to Africa only a few months earlier to discuss ways and means of improving the financing of the Centre, which was located in Lomé. The consultants had recommended, *inter alia*, the immediate appointment of a Director, the elaboration of a five-year programme of work and the initiation of cooperative fund-raising efforts. The consultants had been sent in response to the General Assembly's request, in its resolution 51/46 E, that the Secretary-General should explore new ways and means of funding the Centre and should report to it at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the resolution. Thus, the question of the Lomé Regional Centre should not have been taken up at the fifty-second session.

50. Moreover, in document A/52/7, paragraph II.12, the Advisory Committee had expressed the view that the proposal of the Secretary-General to abolish the centres should be drawn to the attention of the First Committee and that before the General Assembly took a decision on the matter, the Secretary-General should provide additional information on the status of voluntary contributions and, as concerned Lomé, the status of discussions with UNDP. With respect to voluntary contributions, his Government and those of many other African countries were making efforts to provide substantial contributions to the trust fund for the Centre. The First Committee had been unable to discuss the issue in depth, since it had taken up the question only minutes before completing its work for the fifty-second session. Therefore, his delegation was in favour of maintaining the three posts of the directors of the centres in the programme budget for 1998-1999 so that the centres could pursue their activities.

51. **Mr. Sklar** (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported the reorganization and redistribution of responsibilities envisaged in the Secretary-General's proposals, including the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General. The question raised by the Advisory Committee concerning the level of remuneration for that post must be addressed, but could easily be resolved. Although he agreed that the President of the General Assembly must be provided with adequate resources, the request for an additional $500,000 seemed unnecessary and should be clarified. He supported the establishment of a Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation, but felt that it should be headed by an Assistant Secretary-General rather than an Under-Secretary-General. Moreover, the reclassification to the Assistant Secretary-General level of a D-2 post in the Office of the Legal Counsel seemed unjustified. An increase in the number of high-level positions would represent a step backward for an organization that was downsizing in an effort to enhance its efficiency and productivity.

52. The United States supported the consolidation into a single department of the three departments in the economic and social fields, since that would promote a more coordinated approach to the different aspects of development. It also supported the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the programmes on crime control, human rights and humanitarian assistance. However, it did not see any need for an Under-Secretary-General post in the proposed new Office of Communications and Public Information.

53. He welcomed the proposal to apply net budgeting to jointly financed activities, since it would advance the concept of full disclosure and provide a clearer presentation of the actual expenses to be borne by Member States for the regular budget. Any outstanding technical concerns could be cleared up by the Secretariat. In principle, his delegation supported the establishment of a development account; he trusted that the Secretariat would shortly provide the Advisory Committee with the information it needed to make a final recommendation.

54. The United States continued to be concerned about the critical need to maintain an overall ceiling on the budget. Earlier in 1997, the Secretariat, in a public statement, had estimated that the budget would amount to $2.533 billion after recosting; that figure had been recognized as a target by the United States Congress and its maintenance had been stipulated as a condition for the payment of $100 million of the United States' assessment for 1997. It would be naive and self-destructive to ignore the implications for the United Nations of failure to adopt a budget within the $2.533-billion limit. Although $160 million of the United States 1997 assessment was currently available, it was in danger of being withheld if the United Nations breached that budget limit, even by a vote of its members.

55. Those Member States which relished the opportunity to embarrass or abuse the United States in public could do as they pleased; however, it was unacceptable for them to do real damage to the United Nations in the process. The Organization could carry out all of its crucial functions and mandates within the budget limit, *inter alia*, by eliminating activities of little value and improving efficiency. Although some delegations had said that they were not interested in solving the problems of a single Member State, it must be borne in mind that those problems ultimately affected not the United States, but the United Nations. His delegation would cooperate diligently with the other delegations to deliver a budget that covered the Organization's needs while remaining within the appropriate resource level.

56. **Mr. Jara** (Chile), endorsing the statements made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries respectively, said that his delegation attached great significance to decolonization and believed that the Fifth Committee should approve the request to maintain the Decolonization Unit in order to implement fully the Organization's decolonization programme. His delegation was also keen to revitalize the activities of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean based in Lima, and in that connection he expressed his concern that the post of the centre's director had been eliminated.

57. *Ms. Incera (Costa Rica), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

58. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco), endorsing the statements made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries respectively, said that, with reference to section 6 of the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999, his delegation did not share the view advanced by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 28 of its second report contained in document A/52/7/Add.1 that there was no need to reclassify the D-2 post in the Office of the Legal Counsel to the Assistant Secretary-General level. Accordingly, the Committee should follow the Secretary-General's recommendation.

59. **Mr. Rozembaic** (Argentina), endorsing the statement made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that his delegation had noted that the proposed post of Deputy Secretary-General would not require election or confirmation by the General Assembly. However, given the importance of the post and the political and legal implications of that officer's duties, the Secretariat should clarify what role Member States and the General Assembly would play in his appointment.

60. While supporting the transformation of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs into a new Department of Disarmament Affairs, his delegation reminded the Committee that the elaboration of strategies and policies to halt weapons proliferation was the task of Member States. With regard to section 14, his delegation merely wished to comment that the proposed merger of crime- and narcotics-related functions in a new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention might lead to confusion in matters relating exclusively to either one of the two components. Argentina welcomed the consolidation of various economic and social functions in the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs under section 7A and the establishment of the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator under section 25.

61. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples still performed valuable work, and Member States had rightly rejected the proposed transfer of the Decolonization Unit from the Department of Political Affairs to the new Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (DGAACS), a move which would have contravened the provisions of the medium-term plan and undermined the eminently political character of the Special Committee. The Secretariat's assurance that the proposed transfer would be purely administrative in nature had caused even greater confusion, especially when it became apparent that the primary objective of the transfer had not been to save money or improve efficiency. In the ensuing debate, the Secretary-General had reaffirmed the importance of the decolonization programme and his wish that substantive responsibility for decolonization should remain within the Department of Political Affairs. Substantive services to the Special Committee would therefore be provided by a stand-alone Decolonization Unit, which should continue to enjoy its current level of human and financial resources.

62. **Ms. Chen Yue** (China), endorsing the statement made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77, said that her delegation concurred with the budget recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in paragraph 53 of its second report (A/52/7/Add.1). The Organization's budgeting should be so organized as to ensure that all mandates were implemented in full, and hence it was both arbitrary and dangerous to set a predetermined budget ceiling. DGAACS should be provided with sufficient human and financial resources in view of its central importance to the work of the Organization. The Secretary-General's report on reform measures and proposals contained in document A/52/303 had failed to clarify why DGAACS would not serve the Fifth and Sixth Committees of the General Assembly or the Security Council, nor was there any explanation of how the servicing arrangements for the Fifth and Sixth Committees differed from those of other committees.

63. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a development account funded by savings from reduced non-programme costs and other management efficiencies, and endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations on net budgeting. The Secretariat should analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the new method and assess its impact on the budgetary process. The General Assembly should defer its deliberations on that matter pending receipt of a further report.

64. Her delegation wished to echo the positions of the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on human rights, particularly with reference to the right to development, the creation of databases and the allocation of additional resources to strengthen the New York Office. In all discussions regarding the budget, China wished to stress the importance of the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

65. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria), endorsing the statements made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania

and Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries respectively, said that his delegation fully supported the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General on the understanding that reform measures would not conflict with specific mandates of the General Assembly, established management rules and procedures, or the provisions of the medium-term plan for 1998-2001.

66. Algeria welcomed the retention of the substantive activities of the decolonization programme in the Department of Political Affairs. On the other hand, the programme budget narrative of section 7A did not faithfully reflect the medium-term plan, since it failed to attach enough weight to economic growth or sustainable development. His delegation also shared the Advisory Committee's concern that the Secretariat had omitted to provide comprehensive information on activities relating to technical cooperation. It was also important that adequate personnel resources should be provided in that field.

67. The Secretariat should provide a staffing table for the proposed new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. At the same time, his delegation was pleased that two new posts had been proposed to strengthen the capacity of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to deal with issues related to terrorism.

68. It was essential to avoid being selective on the issue of human rights, which should not be manipulated for political purposes. In that regard his delegation had serious reservations about some aspects of the programme narrative, especially the downplaying of the right to development. Detailed information should be provided on the allocation of resources to the right to development. There was no justification for the proposed increase in resources for the New York Office, which was engaged solely in coordination activities. Finally, his delegation objected to paragraph 25.2, subparagraph (b), of the Secretary-General's reform measures and proposals contained in document A/52/303 on the grounds that it was not based on any mandate; the subparagraph should therefore be deleted.

69. **Mr. Saha** (India), endorsing the statements made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries respectively, said that reforms could not serve as a substitute for provision of adequate resources for full and effective implementation of all mandated programmes and activities, especially those in the developmental sectors. No amount of reform could succeed if the Organization continued to be hampered by a lack of resources.

70. His delegation welcomed the proposal to allocate funds to a development account. However, administrative cost reductions for financing the development account should not adversely impact the implementation of mandated programmes and activities. The Secretariat should provide further details on the future sustainability of such an account.

71. Resources for coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance were separate from and additional to resources for the mandated activities of the bodies which actually carried out those activities, for example the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In that connection, his delegation was anxious for reassurance that the scarce resources available to UNDP would not be diverted to the administrative costs of transferred activities. Furthermore, the Secretary-General should provide detailed proposals on the future financing of transferred activities with a view to ensuring that such transfers were not detrimental to the operational activities of entities such as UNDP.

72. India supported strengthening the right to development and the capacity of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to deal with terrorism.

73. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt), after expressing his delegation's support for the statements made by the Tanzanian representative on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Colombian representative on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, emphasized that the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 formed the principal basis of direction for the general policies of the United Nations. His delegation also supported the proposal to establish a post of Deputy Secretary-General, and would comment upon its financial and administrative implications after the General Assembly had adopted a final decision on the subject. It had no objection to the proposal for the establishment of a new Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation, although the relevant narrative should be reviewed to ensure that it was fully consistent with the medium-term plan.

74. In connection with section 14 in document A/52/303 (Crime control), his delegation welcomed the proposal to establish two new posts with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to address issues related to terrorism, which, in his view, had failed to receive the due attention of the international community. Given that terrorism posed a stumbling block to worldwide social, economic and political development and was, moreover, a violation of human rights, concerted international efforts should be made to eliminate it. The statement concerning those two posts, contained in

paragraph 39 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/52/7/Add.1), that "the Committee ... trusts that the addition of this new function will not have a negative impact on the activities of the Centre in other areas", was therefore misplaced and unjustified, particularly since the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 proposed to strengthen international efforts to eliminate all forms of terrorism.

75. With regard to the proposal contained in section 26 (Communications and public information) to abolish various administrative posts, his delegation shared the view contained in paragraph 49 of the Advisory Committee's report that no abolitions should be implemented until the capacity of each integrated office to carry out the public information and communication functions had been assured. In that connection, it fully supported the valuable efforts aimed at strengthening and promoting the Department of Public Information and, given the important future role of information and communications, the proposal to reclassify a post at Assistant Secretary-General level to Under-Secretary-General level.

76. With respect to legal affairs, his delegation believed that there was insufficient justification for the proposed reclassification of the D-2 post in the Office of Legal Affairs to the Assistant Secretary-General level, and agreed with the view of the Advisory Committee in that respect. It supported the view that the Decolonization Unit should be redeployed to the Department of Political Affairs and should have the resources to enable it to undertake fully its activities.

77. As for the proposed organizational changes in the field of social and economic affairs and the subsequent changes in the handling of the economic and social development programmes approved in the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, his delegation would submit its own proposals during the informal consultations to be held on the matter. Lastly, he reaffirmed the important role of the Advisory Committee; its reports should always meet the customary standard, which was not so in the case of its report contained in document A/52/7/Add.1.

78. *Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Chairman, resumed the Chair.*

79. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the level of resources approved by the Committee must be adequate to implement fully all the activities and programmes mandated by the General Assembly. Cuba was therefore opposed to the imposition of arbitrary ceilings not recognized by the Assembly. Such ceilings would only exacerbate the chaotic situation caused by the repeated withholding of contributions by the principal contributor and made worse by the adoption of Assembly resolution 50/214 and other successive resolutions on the budget. It was essential to put an end to that situation in order not only to guarantee the proper functioning of the Organization but also to restore its confidence and credibility. Efforts to streamline the United Nations would succeed only if an end was put to the payments crisis caused by the withholding of assessed contributions and to financial blackmail by the principal contributor.

80. Her delegation regretted the failure of CPC to make recommendations on a number of important issues because of the political positions adopted by some Member States: such attitudes made it difficult for that Committee to discharge its mandate fully. It also regretted the Advisory Committee's failure to state clearly the technical justification for the adoption of its decisions. Her delegation nevertheless supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation to approve resources for the full implementation of all activities. It also supported the proposal to restore the resources and posts which had been taken away as a result of net budgeting. The change to net budgeting violated not only the statutes of the Joint Inspection Unit and of the International Civil Service Commission but also the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and the provisions of paragraph 21 of General Assembly resolution 51/221 B.

81. Reacting to the proposals of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/303, she sought clarification of whether the proposed post of Deputy Secretary-General under section 1A (Overall policy-making, direction and coordination) would be a permanent one. It would also be helpful to know the basis on which the remuneration of the Deputy Secretary-General had been calculated and whether comparisons had been made with the emoluments received by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation.

82. The Strategic Planning Unit should be staffed by one P-5, one P-4 and one General Service staff member. There was no justification for the personnel resources requested by the Secretary-General for the new structure. It would also be helpful to know what justification existed to support the request for consultants for the Unit. Upon receipt of that information, her delegation would take a position on the level of resources requested under section 1A. Cuba, moreover, was concerned at the increase in the number of high-level posts in the Office of the Secretary-General as a result of the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's reports on international cooperation for development (A/52/6/Rev.1) and United Nations reform: measures and proposals (A/52/303). She hoped that the issue would be

addressed in the report which the Advisory Committee had requested in paragraph 56 of its second report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/7/Add.1).

83. With regard to section 1B (General Assembly affairs and conference services), Cuba was of the view that the resources proposed for the activities of the Special Committee of 24 should be transferred to section 2A (Political affairs). In addition, given the political nature of the subject and the substantive work done by staff in that area, all the resources proposed for the subprogramme on decolonization should be transferred to the Department of Political Affairs. The level of resources proposed for the stand-alone Decolonization Unit within the Department of Political Affairs did not reflect the political importance of the subject and did not reflect the commitments given by the Secretary-General. It was essential for the Department of Political Affairs to retain all the resources that had been proposed, since a transfer of the resources to section 1B would marginalize the decolonization programme, which, as was well known, had all along been the intention of some Member States.

84. In contrast, the secretariats of the Fifth and Sixth Committees and of the Security Council should be transferred to the new Department, which would be consistent with the philosophy behind the proposal to transfer other secretariats.

85. The General Assembly should keep under review the structure of the Department of Political Affairs and of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with a view to their possible future consolidation, which would facilitate a more rational use of resources, eliminate the many instances of duplication and overlapping that existed between the two Departments and achieve economies of scale.

86. Turning to the proposals under section 7A (Economic and social affairs), she said that while her delegation was not opposed to the establishment of a new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, such a structure should be kept under review to enable the General Assembly to evaluate its implementation of priority activities in the field of economic and social development. Her delegation was deeply concerned at the proposed reduction in resources for technical cooperation, which appeared to have been mistakenly attributed to a policy decision by the General Assembly.

87. The Secretariat should indicate where in the new structure it was proposed to locate the administrative support for the technical cooperation programme and how it proposed to maintain the real capacity of the Organization to implement the programme. In particular, her delegation would like to know the reasons for making such substantial changes in the staffing of the Executive Office of the former Department for Development Support and Management Services. In view of the importance of the activities of that Office in support of projects, her delegation would welcome a conference room paper indicating the changes in staffing and the volume of work that would remain in the new Executive Office, given its size and the nature of the activities to be carried out.

88. With regard to section 22 (Human rights), Cuba considered that there was no justification for the reclassification of the post of head of the New York Office from D-1 to D-2. Any decision on the matter should apply to all liaison offices, particularly those of the regional commissions. She would be grateful if the Secretariat could provide the Committee with a description of the new functions attached to the post and their programmatic impact. The Secretariat should also provide a breakdown of the resources proposed for the travel of officials from Geneva to New York, which hardly seemed necessary in the light of the proposal to strengthen the New York Office.

89. The resolution to be adopted by the Assembly on section 25 (Humanitarian assistance) should reaffirm the mandate of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as approved in resolution 46/182, and omit any reference to the Security Council so as not to disturb the delicate political balance that had been achieved at the time of the adoption of the resolution. In view of the impact the proposal contained in the recommendations on the subject would have on the medium-term plan, the Secretariat should submit a document indicating the proposed changes.

90. Cuba supported the proposal to allocate $12.7 million under section 34 (Development account) for the establishment of a development account and agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation on the need to undertake a detailed examination of a number of issues related to the "dividend for development". It continued to be opposed to the use of involuntary separation as a means of achieving savings or implementing reforms. It was therefore deeply troubled by the information provided by the President of the Staff Council concerning a number of recent cases of involuntary separation, which appeared to have been carried out without due regard for the norms in force that governed such separation. The Secretariat should inform members of the steps being taken to prevent involuntary separation.

91. **Mr. Miranda** (Peru) said that his delegation fully associated itself with the statements made by the

representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. He wished, however, to draw special attention to the proposals concerning disarmament contained in section 2C(2) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/6/Rev.1). In the view of his delegation, the proposal to abolish the three P-5 posts which had been approved for the three regional centres at Kathmandu, Lomé and Lima was not consistent with the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and with the Secretary-General's assertion that disarmament was a central issue on the global agenda. Regional disarmament centres had an important role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security and in global disarmament. Every effort should therefore be made to revitalize them and to prevent their definitive closure. He wished to note, lastly, that the situation concerning the post of Director of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean had arisen at a time when funds were available to permit the Centre to carry out its activities.

92. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic), commenting on document A/52/303/Add.1, said that it provided for fewer posts than envisaged in the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. Although the Secretary-General had pledged that the posts in the Decolonization Unit would remain as stated in the plan, only two posts were now envisaged, which was impractical and would also have a detrimental effect on the Unit's political significance. Moreover, in contradiction to the medium-term plan, it was proposed that the post of Secretary of the Special Committee should be reduced from the D-1 to the P-5 level, which his delegation could not accept. The post should remain within the Department of Political Affairs, as should those of the assistants to the Secretary of the Special Committee. The reduction of that post against the reclassification of a post from P-5 to D-1 in the DGAACS was also inconsistent with the letter of the Secretary-General in that connection. His delegation would therefore be seeking further clarification of the reason behind the proposed reduction.

93. **Mrs. Emerson** (Portugal) welcomed the Secretary-General's assurances of the high priority which he attached to the decolonization programme. She nevertheless wondered whether the stand-alone Decolonization Unit which he proposed to establish in the Department of Political Affairs would have adequate financial and human resources to ensure that the Organization's substantive work in the field of decolonization would be carried out effectively.

94. **Mr. Pérez-Desoy** (Spain) said that the reduction in resources for the decolonization programme and the transfer of part of them to the new Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services just as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000) was drawing to an end was both unfortunate and inopportune.

95. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) asked whether the Advisory Committee had reviewed the Secretary-General's proposals contained in document A/52/303/Add.1. In his delegation's view, those proposals were inconsistent with the Secretary-General's stated commitment to implementing subprogramme 1.6 (Decolonization) of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. The net effect of the proposals would be to reduce the human resources available under section 2A (Political affairs) for the substantive activities of the decolonization programme to one D-1 and one General Service staff member. A stand-alone Decolonization Unit in the Department of Political Affairs was, moreover, not a viable arrangement. It was important not to undermine the objectives of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and the Secretary-General's proposals were therefore not acceptable. He hoped that the matter could be resolved in informal consultations.

96. **Mr. Ayoub** (Iraq), having expressed his support for the statements made by the Tanzanian representative on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Colombian representative on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the information contained in document A/52/303/Add.1 had failed to take into account the statements made by a number of delegations in the General Assembly and in the Fourth and Fifth Committees. Moreover, it was inconsistent with the undertaking made by the Secretary-General to the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24 and to the delegations which had adopted the draft resolution in the Fourth Committee (A/C.4/52/L/4/Rev.1), namely that the posts in the Decolonization Unit would remain as stated in the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. Instead, the number of posts at the various levels had been reduced. The proposed D-1 post in the Department of Political Affairs was also impractical, as one person could not perform the functions of the Decolonization Unit. Furthermore, the post of the Secretary of the Special Committee had been downgraded from D-1 to P-5 level.

97. His delegation therefore could not support the proposals in document A/52/303/Add.1, and requested that the medium-term plan should continue to apply where connection with the posts in question were concerned, as promised by the Secretary-General. It also requested that the posts of the Secretary of the Special Committee and his assistants should remain within the Department of Political Affairs. Lastly, his delegation disagreed with the proposal to provide a post at the D-1 level for the Executive Officer

of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, as that post had originally been allocated to the Secretary of the Special Committee.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.